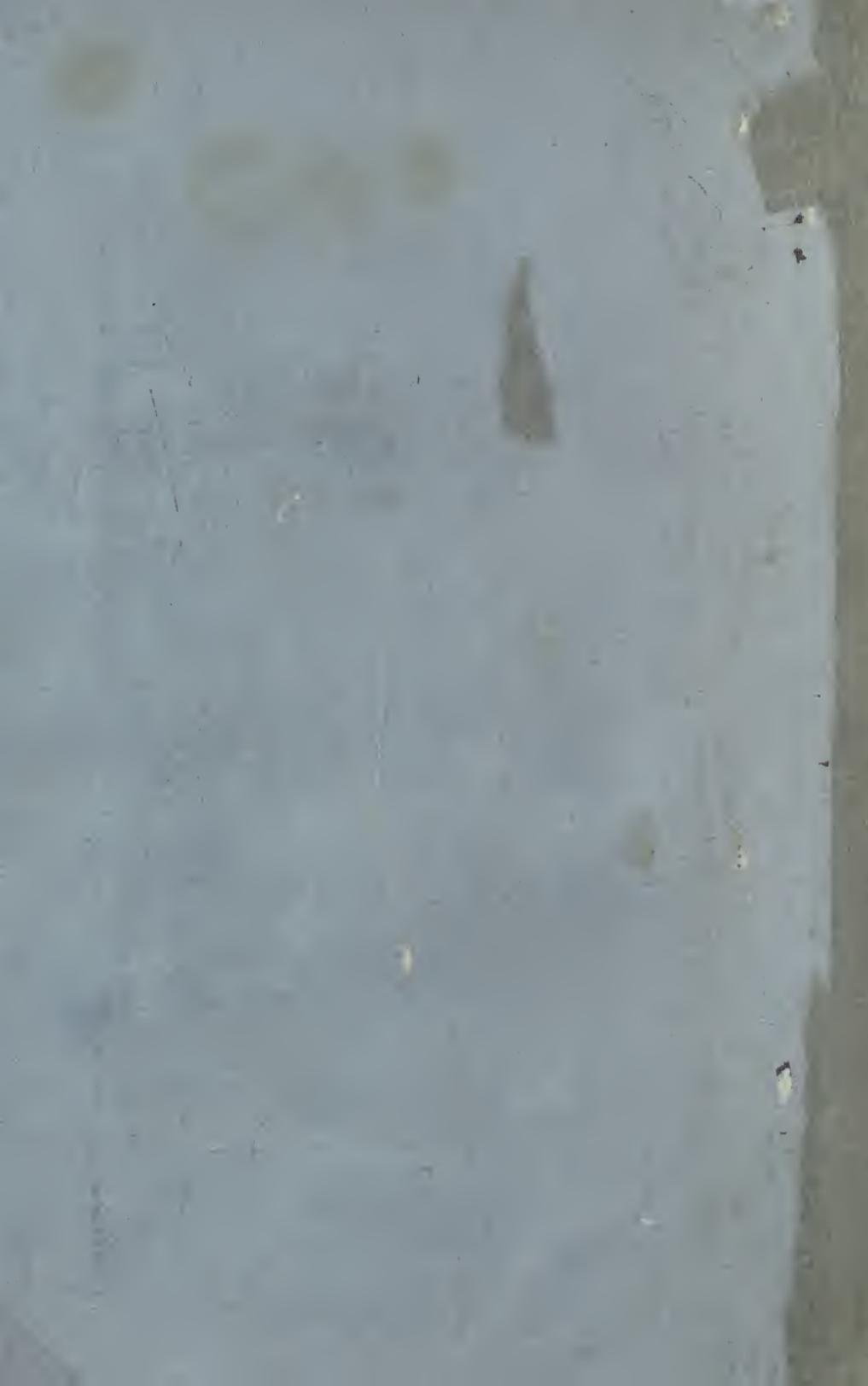


THE IDLE
AND
INDUSTRIOUS
MINER

PUBLISHED BY ANTHONY & CO.
UNION OFFICE
SACRAMENTO CITY
CAL.



THE

IDLE AND INDUSTRIOUS

WEEKLY JOURNAL.

by Alonzo Delano, 1806
1874



SACRAMENTO:

JAMES ANTHONY & CO., PUBLISHERS, 21 J STREET.

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P R E F A C E .

THE pretensions of the little book thus given to the public, are humble. The designer of the pictures (Mr. Nahl) has succeeded in a life-like portrayal of scenes in the mines ; the engraver (Mr. Armstrong) has brought his drawings out in masterly relief ; while the highest boon claimed by the author, is to have contributed a few descriptive verses with a moral—the only recommendation, perhaps, which they contain.

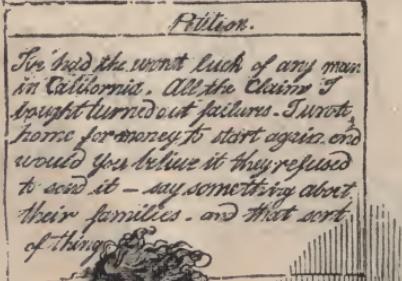
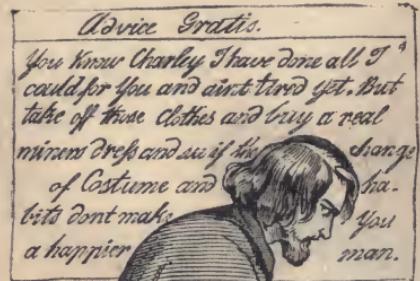
Of similar publications issued from the press of California, it is questionable whether any have come so near to the portrayal of actual mining life as this. There are but two courses for the miner to pursue —one of industry and sobriety ; the other of indolence and vice. These are generally shunned or indulged according to the early education, natural tastes, or degrees of temptation by which the miner is surrounded. Fortunate is he whose better judgment leads him to an emulation of the honesty and sedulous devotion which are represented as characterising the triumphant hero of this little poem.



1525 THE IDLE AND INDUSTRIOS MINER.

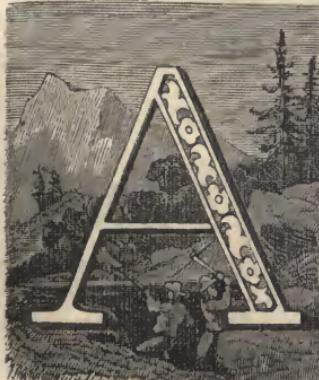


WO school-boy friends, with buoyant hearts,
And grown to man's estate,
Repaired to California's shores,
To fill their cup of fate :
Endowed with noble gifts of mind,
And vigorous in health,
Their future seemed a harvest-field,
Abundant in its wealth.
Lured by a hope of rapid gain,
The mines at once they sought,
Contented with a cabin home,
In a secluded spot ;
Their start in life was equal, and
At first the race was fair,
But soon resembled that between
The TORTOISE AND THE HARE.



Men do not always realize
Their cherished dreams of youth,
For often wormwood lies concealed
Within the bud of truth.
While one the glittering prize plucks down,
Another's reach is vain—
Ambition dies within him, and
He never tries again.
'Tis thus our story takes its rise,
To trace the different ends—
The efforts, triumphs and mishaps
Of these respective friends;—
How nobly one achieved the goal
Of fortune and renown,
And how the other's sun of life
In clouds of shame went down.





ND now, behold! at early dawn,
 Before the mists have fled,
 Our zealous hero seeks his claim,
 Beside a river's bed;
 As yet unused to toil, his hands
 Are cramped and numbed with pain,
 But in his heart an honest pride
 Forbids him to complain.
 The future is a promised world,
 In which his fortune lies,
 And industry, alone, he feels,
 Can win its golden prize.
 Already, in the vale below,
 He hears the pick and spade,
 And hastens to greet the busy throng,
 And join their delving trade.



AD, there should be a converse side
To such a pleasant view,
But history demands the pen
To frame its record true.
The early morn had come and gone,
And in the amber sky
The sun had slowly climbed his course
And stood at noonday high.
Nor sun, nor moon, nor thoughts of fame
Disturb the sluggard's rest,
Last night's debauch has left its sting,
And borne away their zest.
This, then, is how the idler friend
Commenced a bad career,
So fatally and madly run
Within his mining year.



EQUITED toil! Eureka! Look!
And read within those eyes
Their speaking luster, as they dwell
Upon the glittering prize!
The vein is struck! ah, noble heart!
A thrill of joy is thine!—
A purer and a better thrill
Than that produced by wine.
A thousand thoughts of home, and bliss
Reserved for coming years
Have swiftly flashed across thy soul
And melted thee to tears—
Tears—not of grief, or vain regrets,
For thou art still a man—
But, thinking of thy poverty
And gazing in the pan!

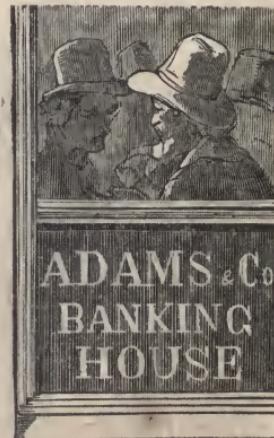


URN to the other loitering friend
 Yet on a drunken spree—
 His tools neglected, and his face
 The type of idiocy.
 The bottle is his chief delight,
 No care disturbs his brain,
 He smokes, and chews, and yawns, and drinks,
 And wakes and drinks again ;
 Or when he leaves his cabin walls
 To dig an hour or so,
 Ill luck attends him,—so he thinks,—
 Wherever he may go.
 Forever armed with some excuse
 He deems his cause is good,
 Till want assails him at his door
 And drives him forth for food.





MBITTERED at his low estate—
Unmindful of its cause—
The sluggard mopes away his hours
Indifferent to applause.
His noble friend appeals to him
To stimulate his pride,
By representing wealth to flow
On fortune's courted tide ;
He dilates on his own success,
Then offers half his claim
To share his fellow's wretchedness
And rescue him from shame.
Alas ! when emulation dies
There's no Promethean coal
To kindle up its wasted fires
And re-illum the soul !

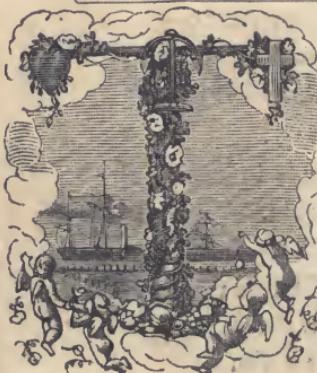


E DEUM! the banking-house is sought!

For, see, the well filled sack
 Our zealous hero proudly bears
 Upon his sturdy back ;
 A hundred envious eyes behold
 The nature of his gains—
 A hundred envious hearts desire
 The gold his sack contains ;
 But once secure within the vault
 Where Adams holds the key

And little danger's to be feared
 From theft or treachery.

A draft at three per cent. relieves
 The mind of every care,
 And when remitted safely home
 The drawer knows 'tis there !





HAT other heart could feel a thrill
 Of pleasure more sincere
 On hearing of his great success
 Than that of "mother dear;"
 So down the thoughtful miner sits
 Elate with joy to write,
 His tools about him, and his "stew"
 Before him, full in sight.
 There's not a hope his breast contains—
 An anguish or a fear,
 But memory retains to break
 Unto that mother's ear;
 He told her all, and asked her prayers
 To keep his heart from guile:
 And when he sweetly slept that night
 His face revealed a smile.



H! woful picture of distress !
The idler takes his pen,
His ragged coat and shaggy beard
Denote him worst of men ;
But there is still within his soul
A principle of truth,
Which he has borne unspotted through
His days of well-trained youth.
“Dear mother !” this is what he writes,

And saddened by the word,
He feels a gush of tenderness
Within his bosom stirred ;
With too much power it racks his mind,
And from the bottle’s store
He turns the liquor out, and drinks
Till he can write no more.



ORN—Sabbath morning! at his door

The thoughtful miner sits,
His sister's Bible to peruse
As such a morn befits ;
The birds are sporting near his feet,
Rich flowers are by his side,
And as he reads, his heart resolves
That God shall be his guide.

He goes not where the noisy throng
Resort at games to play,

But profits by a goodly work

On this, a goodly day.

As twilight falls, his evening meal

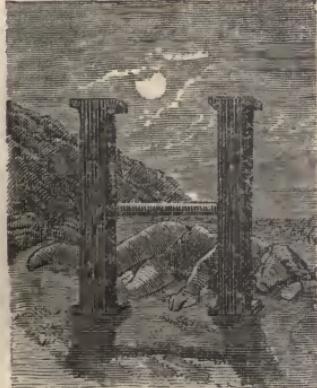
In silence he partakes,

And soundly sleeping through the night

Again at sunrise wakes.



EAR MOTHER!" it were well to pause
And leave the page unfilled
Nor tell how deep in vice the hand
That traced the line was skilled!
Amid a throng of curious men
That Sabbath night it tossed
The only coin the idler owned
Upon a card, which lost.
"Make way!" a dealer sternly cries,
Who hauls the money down;
"Make way!" the second one repeats,
And hurls an angry frown.
A dozen hands lent willing aid,
And backward through the crowd
They drew their humbled victim, whom
They left subdued and cowed.



ANDS OFF!" a drunkard grown to be,
 It were a bootless task
 To drag the idler from the bar
 While it contains a flask.
 His truest friend exhorts in vain—
 In vain the landlord's threat,
 He struggles for another glass
 On which his heart is set:
 In pity fill a bumper up,
 To quench his burning thirst!
 He has no greater joy in life,
 And fate may do its worst.
 The moon shone softly down that night
 Where stupefied and pale,
 A senseless man deserted lay
 Within a quiet vale!



LY, thou guilty culprit, fly!
 The fatal weapon aimed
 Would doom thee to a felon's death,
 For thou art thief proclaimed!
 Fly to some cavern, where with wolves
 Thy home may haply be—
 Not one amid the mob bestows
 A kindly thought on thee!
 A gallows to thy maddened brain
 Appears in frightful view,
 And to avoid its frowning form
 Seems more than thou canst do.
 This is remorse—alas! too late,
 For months of wasted time;
 Before thy better nature changed
 And thou wert steeped in crime!

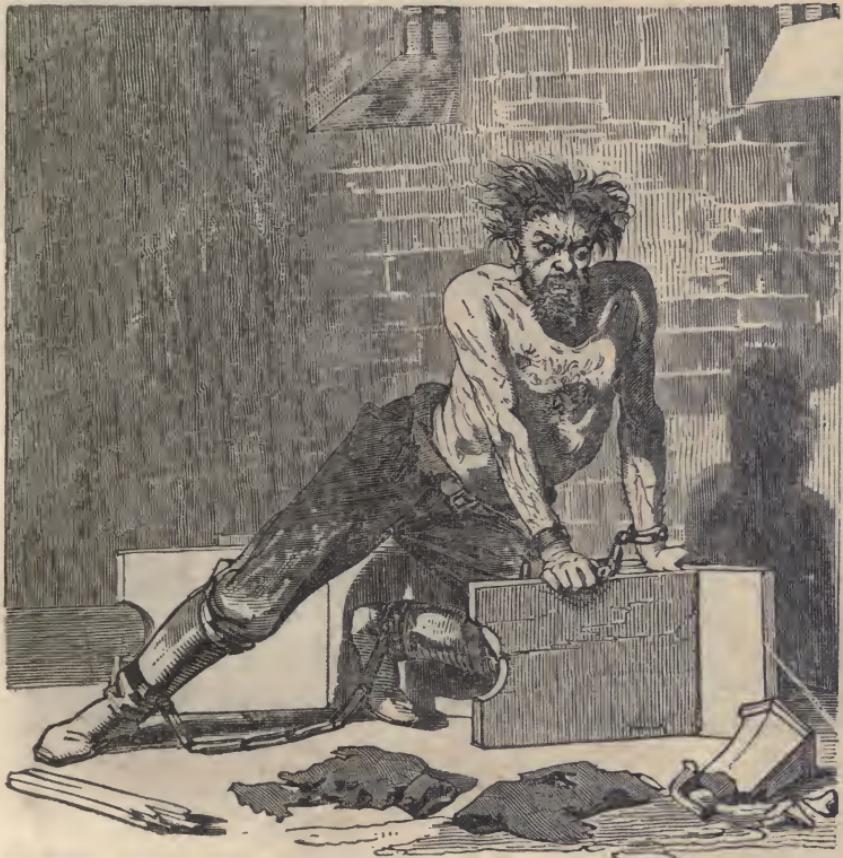


HROUGH forest and on road pursued
 The guilty man at last
 Escapes unhurt, and lays him down
 To think upon the past;
 Oh, God ! how sorrowful his groans—
 How bitter flow his tears,
 When recollection paints the hues
 Of boyhood's brighter years !
 Concealed within a worn-out claim,
 He deems himself secure,
 And finds his guilt the only thing
 His thoughts cannot endure.
 He gazes on the rattlesnake
 With neither dread nor care ;
 But yields himself completely up
 A victim to despair.



ONG hours past—thrice had the day
 Its course of glory sped,
 Yet, on that wretched man, the sun
 No ray of comfort shed.
 By hunger driven forth at last,
 He begged a crust of bread,
 But found the hearts of those he asked
 To all his pleadings dead.
 “My God !” he cried, “ and must I starve
 Where Plenty yields her store ! ”

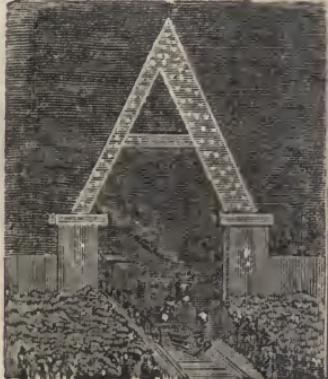
And seizing on a tray of food
 Rushed wildly for the door.
 The landlord struck him with a knife
 Before he could depart ;
 At which the frenzied culprit turned
 And stabbed him to the heart !



NCLOSED within a prison's walls
Through all the dreary night
A madman's frantic cries resound
To curd the blood with fright;
A pack of prowling wolves have caught
The rattling of his chains,
And pause to mingle with the sound
Their own unearthly strains!
Not long that noble frame shall writhe;
Not long that strength be shown;
For death is smiling through the bars,
And claims them for his own.
E'en while those startled eye-balls glare,
The heart grows icy cold;
He falls—what else concerns his fate
Is easy to be told.



ROUND the felon's corpse there stand
Three men of gentle mein,
By whom such sights as these, perhaps,
Had many times been seen.
The earliest and fondest friend
Bends o'er it, filled with grief ;
The man of God has named the cross
And its repentant thief.
To die from home, alas ! is sad ;
But oh, far sadder yet,
To feel our crimes are what the world
Refuses to forget.
Then let a tear of pity fall,
Nor curse the idler's doom.
He was a miner—may his faults
Lie buried in his tomb !



H ! holy spectacle of love !
 A sister's gentle hand—
 A pious mother's fond embrace
 Are what its joys command !
 The long lost son is back again
 From California's shore—
 The brother's ample purse is filled
 With pounds of shining ore !
 He brings them home his winning smile—
 A form robust and strong—
 And soul unspotted by the crimes
 Of those he fell among.
 He tells his friends, that wish to know
 The cause of his success,
 That those who seek the mines must work,
AND DRINK AND GAMBLE LESS !

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